

Trusting the Lord

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TEXT—Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.—Jer. 17:8.

The blessedness of this text is for both sinner and saint. The sinner has nothing to do for salvation but simply trust the Lord, and the saint has nothing more to do for satisfaction. The great obstacle to blessedness is man's evil heart of unbelief. The sin that is common to all men is the besetting sin of unbelief keeping the sinner from salvation and likewise the saint from satisfaction.



The word "trust" has several meanings. In Psalms 2:12, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," it means to have confidence in the Lord as the Ruler or King. Not long ago a man held the high-sounding title of his majesty, czar of all the Russians. As such many put their trust in him. But he lost the high place and became merely Nicholas Romanoff without power to aid those who trusted him. But the one who trusts the Lord as Ruler and King has One whose title and throne is established forever.

In Ruth 2:12, Boaz speaking to Ruth concerning the Lord, says: "Under whose wings thou art come to trust." Here the word means "to find a refuge." It reminds one of the high winds and mounting waves threatening to engulf a laboring ship. But battered and blown, she comes tumbling over the harbor bar out of the stormy seas to the calm and safety of her refuge.

Or it reminds of the mother bird calling her young at the approach of an enemy and gathering them to safety under her protecting wings. So the saint upon life's stormy sea may find a refuge under the wings of the Almighty. Safety and rest from all storms and all enemies are his by simply trusting the Lord.

A slightly different meaning of the word is found in Psalms 56:3, "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee." Here it means "to lean on." The psalmist found himself surrounded by enemies. None came to his support. There seemed no help for him. Tired and weary in the unequal struggle his soul cried out for some one to lean on and to gather strength from. Facing the surrounding enemies alone the fear of failure and defeat gripped him until relief came by trusting in the Lord or leaning on his God. Perhaps, my reader, there is no way out of your difficulties, but there is a way over, and you may tread that way by leaning on your Lord. Trust him, lean upon him, and the harder you lean the more you please him.

Another meaning of the word is in Psalms 22:3, "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him." It means here, "He rolled himself on the Lord." This psalm foretells the experience of our Lord upon the cross. He was there forsaken and alone. Even his God seemed to have left him and his followers had fled. His enemies rejoiced in his sorrow. The blackness of midnight gloom settled upon him. But then in spite of themselves, his enemies gave voice in this way to satisfaction. He could roll himself on the Lord. This is his desire for his people today. There may not be strength to rise and walk to him, but there is always power to roll oneself upon the Lord, to trust him and trusting, find that he not only carries the burden but the believer as well.

Still another meaning of the word is in Job 35:14, where it means "to stay upon." Job could not understand why such grievous sorrow and loss should be his. He desired to find the Almighty and plead with him, but God appeared to hide from him. How often it is so with Christians. They walk in sorrow's path and troubles spring out on every side. They pray, but the heavens seem as brass. They cry to God, but he appears to have forgotten them. They search to find the cause and can find none. Darkness surrounds them. What can they do? As Job did, and doing found complete satisfaction, simply trust or stay upon his God.

Glory of the Christ Child.

Christ on this festival honors infants, consecrates suffering, holds up to us the minds of little children, and it is another radiance and beauty added to the manger throne of Bethlehem, that from it streams the gospel of the poor, the gospel of the lonely, the gospel of the sick, the lost, the afflicted, the gospel of little children. The wisdom of Greece and Rome could only spare at this time a push, or a threat, or a curse, which said to the little, the poor, the weak, depart; get you out of the way; it was left for the glorious Gospel of the Blessed Lord to say: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God."—W. C. M. Newbalt.

Heroic France Defies the Hun



Comtesse de Bryas is a Frenchwoman, who came to America last April to represent the American committee for devastated France, and is now engaged in an extensive tour of the United States, speaking about her experiences in the war-torn districts. The comtesse's father is French, but her mother was a Philadelphian who went to Europe when a small child and was brought up there. Her great-grandfather, George Clymer and Thomas Willing, and her granduncle, George Read, were all signers of the Declaration of Independence, and one of them, George Clymer, was among the six who helped to frame the Constitution.—Editor's Note.

By COMTESSE MADELEINE DE BRYAS.

SOMETIMES meet, in the course of my travels, people who say: "Ah, poor France! Tragic, invaded country!" But to these people I would say: "No, no! You do not know your France. It is not poor France, but noble France. Not tragic France, but heroic France!" I can best explain my meaning by describing an incident which took place on the occasion of one of the recent air raids on Paris. An air raid is a nerve-racking time. The newspaper accounts and the magazine stories do not tell you one-hundredth of the anguish lived through by the people who crouch in their cellars, listening to bombs that explode close by and expecting all the time that the next missile will demolish the house over their heads.

The favorite gathering places for civilians during air raids is in the cellars. During the raid of which I speak, one of these underground places was crowded with refugees. But they were not moaning or trembling. Instead, they were constantly joking and laughing about their predicament. They did not for one second lose their fine courage and stanchness.

When the bombs had ceased to fall, they came up to the street level once more. But they did not breathe great sighs of relief and thank their lucky stars for not being hit. Not they! Their eyes glowed with the fire of unquenched spirit, and they shook their fists in the direction of the departing German airplanes.

"Those fools!" they shouted. "Those fools! They think they can break us! They do not know us! Never shall we yield! Never!"

This is not the only splendid exhibition of French devotion that I have seen with my own eyes. The people in the rural regions are no less determined in their ardor. Although nearly one-fifth of France has been invaded by a ruthless enemy and some portions invaded the second time, these country folk would die rather than give themselves up to the foe.

In a village of the devastated district I found a little old woman who was living alone. She was working at washing linen for the soldiers who were in trenches not far away. Her own house had been burned down by the Germans. She told me her pathetic story.

It seems that a German officer who had a very bad reputation for molesting the civilians had been quartered in her house. After he had been there for a few hours he went to the small stove which heated the house and opened it to put in some wood. But when he put in the stick of wood he allowed the end to protrude, so that, as soon as it began to burn, the fire blazed outward into the room. He then placed a screen near this blazing wood so that it would catch fire. The old woman saw what he was doing and knew that it was his design to burn down her house. He had already burned a house in the next street in the same manner. Knowing that she was powerless to prevent him, and being filled with despair, she fell on her knees before him.

"Spare me!" she entreated of him. "Spare this house and allow me to live here in peace. What have I ever done to you?"

But she had hardly uttered these words when shame overcame her because she was abasing herself before a German. In another instant she had risen to her feet.

"What am I doing!" she exclaimed. "Je suis perdue! I am disgraced. I have entreated a favor from the foe of my native country."

Then she crossed the room before the astonished officer and took up his gun. Placing it in his hands she told him to kill her.

"I deserve no less than death," she said. "I have disgraced France by kneeling to ask a favor of one of her enemies."

Probably the German officer would have killed the woman, but at that moment one of his brother officers came into the house. He must have had a more tender heart, for he took pity on the old woman and put a stop to the proceedings. So her

house escaped for the time being. But later on it was burned by other Germans. When I found this woman she was working 18 hours each day washing for the soldiers. I asked her why she worked so hard and she told me that it was because she had nothing left to her in the wide world, and the only way to keep herself from heartbreak was to be always occupied.

The conditions under which most of these people have been living are horrifying. Their houses are heaps of ruins. You can hardly believe the systematic way in which the Germans proceeded to destroy their dwellings. A bomb was thrown into every house along the line of march. The furniture was all broken up or burned, fruit trees were cut down, and the wells polluted. Yet, when the invading tide was swept back these villagers came back at once to their former homes. This devotion of the French peasant to his little home is something which Americans can hardly appreciate. He loves it ardently; it is almost a part of him; he cannot bear to leave it.

During the time when they were struggling to rebuild their shattered homes, these peasants had to live in cellars and dugouts. Of course these places were most unhealthy and not fit to remain in. I once went down into a cellar in which an old couple was living. The roof of the cellar was so low that when I was seated on a little plank talking to the old people I had to stoop. The floor was entirely mud, and the water seeped in through the walls and trickled down in tiny streamlets. In the corner was the straw bed which had been furnished the old couple seven months before. It was indescribably filthy and so damp that one could twist it and wring water out of it. Yet the chief desire of the old woman was for a plate to eat off. The Germans had destroyed their crockery and household utensils and they had only one old metal skillet, in which they cooked and from which they ate.

In one village I saw a mother who had gone back to live in a little shelter which she had built for herself in the corner formed by the only two remaining walls of her dwelling. Over the top of this place she placed planks. One side was open to the weather. The cold, raw weather made it difficult to exist in such a place. I myself have lived in a little wooden building near the front, similar to the barracks in which the soldiers live, and I know the cruel winter weather of these parts of France.

The hardship has been greatest on the little children. Oh, the poor children! They no longer play. They have forgotten all their games. They do not know what it means to run and laugh and be gay. As they walk along the streets you will see them start suddenly and look over their shoulders in a frightened way. So great has been the terror instilled into them by the Germans.

An officer told me of seeing two little children standing against a wall in the town of Mafesia, in the north of France, one day in August, 1914. Across the road was a burning house. When the French officer asked them why they were waiting so patiently, they replied that a German had shut their father and mother up in that house and had told them to wait there until they came back to fetch them.

The treatment of children during the German occupation was very terrible. Little tots of four and five, and children on up to the ages of thirteen and fourteen, were forced to work all day for their enslavers. They were taken into the fields at five in the morning and were not allowed to come back until seven in the evening. During all that time they were given only one meal. Their tasks were to dig potatoes, cut away the barbed-wire entanglements and pick up unexploded shells. After the Germans went away there was no milk to be got because all the cows had been either killed or driven away. In one district there were 500 children who existed for months without a single drop of milk. I met one little girl who had been kept for 20 days on a diet consisting of nothing but bread and soup, the latter being watery and scarcely at all nourishing.

The destruction of the schoolhouses has made it impossible for the young children to gain any education. It is no strange thing to encounter a boy or girl of eleven who can neither read nor write. In their hideous thoroughness, the Germans destroyed books, pencils, desks and all. Not a thing was left. After the American relief workers came into the devastated regions they established schools and built little wooden buildings in which to carry on the work.

At one school they told a story of a little girl who was brought in with the other children to learn to read. As soon as she discovered an old chair in one of the corners she immediately got into it and curled up in utter enjoyment and relaxation. She could not be persuaded to get out of that chair. The teacher inquired why she was so pleased with the chair and learned that the household in which the child lived had not boasted a single chair since the first invasion of the Germans.

The separation of the children from their parents is another very tragic occurrence. In the months and years before they are reunited the children grow and change so that they are not recognizable to their parents when they meet again. Some of them, to be sure, wear on a chain about their necks little gold baptismal gifts on which their names are inscribed. But this is exceptional. It is one of the confessed schemes of the Germans to divide and scatter families as much as possible.

My heart bleeds for the children of France! Oh, that they should suffer this unmerited abuse and tribulation!

The deportation of young girls has been systematically practiced. A German officer comes to the front door of a house and orders the entire family to assemble outside on the door step. Then he picks at random a number of the younger women of the family. "I will take you . . . and you . . . and you!" he says, indicating the chosen ones with his forefinger. At this summons they must leave their homes at once. They are not allowed to pack their belongings nor to carry much baggage. They are permitted only so much as they can carry wrapped in a handkerchief.

After they are taken into Germany they are put to work cultivating the fields, doing the hardest and most menial kind of labor. They are forced to live with the soldiers, and are rudely treated by them. They can send no word to their families, and it is almost as though they were dead.

The relief work in the invaded districts has been tireless. Great credit is due to the American committee for devastated France, organized by Miss Anne Morgan. Over 1,000 children have been turned over to this committee to be cared for. One of its most useful works has been in assisting the stricken people to leave their homes so long as there is danger from the Germans in the vicinity. Pitiful stories are told of the flight of these people. One old woman refused to be separated from her goat in transit, and would only consent to go when she could be assured that another goat could be got in case her own was lost.

France has been hard-pressed, but she is not broken. Never has the morale of the French people been more unshaken than it is today. France hails with joy the arrival of the Americans. It is most fitting that these great sister republics should be fighting side by side in this hour of stress. Victory will be won; it is inevitable! But ah, the pain, the woe and the unnecessary degradation that have followed in the wake of the invaders! Will the world ever forget these? Can the bitter memory ever be effaced?

THE END OF THE WAR.

A soldier at Camp Grant asked a French lieutenant, who was there as instructor, how much longer the war would last. The Frenchman calmly answered: "Well, I am not sure, but the tenth year will surely be the worst, and after that every seventh year will be bad."

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 1

SOME LAWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

LESSON TEXTS—Luke 6:30-35; 11:1-4.
GOLDEN TEXT—Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts 20:35.

DEVOTIONAL READING—II Corinthians 9:3-15.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Luke 16:2; Romans 12:8; II Corinthians 9:6-15; Hebrews 13:16; Ezra 1:2-4; I Chronicles 29:1-5.

The principles of ethics which shall prevail in the earth when Jesus Christ shall be king are entirely different from those of the world. The worldly spirit always inquires as to what gain will accrue from an action or service. Its policy is doing good for the sake of getting good. Those who have been made partakers of the divine nature, who are really subjects of the kingdom, do good because they have the nature and spirit of God, not because they expect something in return.

I. Give to Every Man That Asketh of Thee (v. 30).

This does not mean that any request that may be made by the idle, greedy and selfish should be granted. Only evil would result from such indiscriminate and unregulated giving. Such benevolence would foster idleness and selfishness. Oftentimes the worst thing you can do for a man is to give him money. The drunkard will only spend it for more drink; the gambler will continue his dissipation. The meaning then is, give to the one asking the thing which he needs. The man in poverty needs to be given a way to earn his living, rather than to be given money without the necessity of labor. There is that in the human heart which refuses charity, and cries out for a means to honestly gain a livelihood.

II. Of Him That Taketh Away Thy Goods, Ask Them Not Again (v. 30).

"Ask" here means demand. It doubtless forbids the forcible demanding of the return of that which has been taken from one.

III. Do to Other Men as You Would That They Should Do Unto You (vv. 31-34).

This ethic puts life's activities on the highest possible ground. He does not say, refrain from doing that which you would not like to be done to you, as even Confucius taught; but to positively make the rule of your life the doing to others as you would wish them to do unto you. Loving those who love us, doing good to those who do good to us, and lending to those from whom we hope to receive, is just what all the sinners of the world are doing. The child of the kingdom of Christ is to be different.

IV. Love Your Enemies (v. 35).

That which is natural to the human heart is to hate the enemy. To love in the real sense means to sincerely desire the good of even one's enemy and willingness to do anything possible to bring that good. Such action is only possible to those who have been born again. Christ loved those who hated him. He was willing even to die for his enemies.

V. Lend, Hoping for Nothing Again (v. 35).

This is what the Heavenly Father is constantly doing. He is kind and gracious unto the unthankful and the wicked. He sends his rain and sunshine upon the unjust and sinners. He makes fruitful the toil of those who blaspheme his name. He thus does because it is his nature to do so.

VI. Be Merciful (v. 36).

The example for the imitation of the disciple is the Heavenly Father.

VII. Judge Not (v. 37).

To judge does not mean the placing of just estimates upon men's actions and lives, for, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The tree is judged by the fruit it bears. The thorn tree does not bear figs, nor the apple tree bear grapes. Our only way of discerning the character of men and women is their actions. That which is condemned is censorious judgment—the impugning of motives.

VIII. Condemn Not (v. 37).

This means that we should not pass sentence upon men for their acts, for to their own master they stand or fall (Rom. 14:4). The real reason why such action is not warranted is that the bias of our hearts and the limitation of our judgments render it impossible to righteousness and intelligently pass judgment.

IX. Forgive (v. 37).

Those who forgive shall be forgiven. The one who has realized the forgiving mercy of God will be gracious and forgiving toward others.

XI. Liberality Determined by What is Left (Luke 21:4).

The rich cast into the treasury much, but it was from their abundance. The poor widow cast in all that she had; there was nothing left. God estimates a gift by what one has left, not by the size of the gift. To give the widow's mite is to give all. For the millionaire to give the widow's mite would mean for him to give his millions.

Genius and Taste.

To say nothing of its holiness of authority the Bible contains more specimens of genius and taste than any other volume in existence.—Landon